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WHY NO JOB SCHEME FOR ACID ATTACK VICTIMS, SC ASKS STATES, UTs

The Supreme Court on Monday sought to know why a scheme for rehabilitation of acid attack victims through govt jobs has not been formulated

PAY ALLOWANCE, IF JOBS CAN'T BE GIVEN: SC

The court said if logistical issues arise in providing such employment, the state governments could formulate a policy to pay subsistence allowance to the victims. The court was hearing a plea by Shaheen Malik, an acid attack survivor, seeking appropriate directions to states to implement proper measures for the well-being of acid attack survivors

STRINGENT PUNISHMENTS FOR PERPETRATORS

- The court granted one final opportunity to states and Union Territories to comply with its Jan 27 order directing strong punishment for perpetrators and effective rehabilitation measures for victims
- That order proposed, among other things, seizure of assets of those found guilty of carrying out acid attacks to compensate the victims

2-judge

BENCH HEADED BY CJI SURYA KANT WAS HEARING THE CASE

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

The BIG PICTURE

Household LPG consumers in India **33.1cr** active connections

Imports make up **50%** of total domestic LPG consumption

Commercial LPG usage constitutes **18%** of total LPG sold

Piped natural gas **1.6cr** domestic connections

PIPED GAS

While no restriction has been put on piped gas supply as of now, analysts warn some disruption is likely if the war lingers on

RESTAURANTS HIT

With commercial cylinders in short supply, Bangalore Hotels Association said restaurants in the city will remain shut from today

LPG SHOCKER

OMCs told to meet household demand first; Several states report shortage

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

AMID fears of an imminent shortage of cooking gas due to import disruptions triggered by the ongoing Iran-Israel war, the Union petroleum ministry on Monday directed state-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) to prioritise supply of LPG cylinders to domestic consumers over commercial users. The ministry also increased the waiting period for refills from 21 days to 25 days to prevent hoarding and black marketing.

"All public sector OMCs shall ensure that LPG so procured is supplied/marketed solely to consumers of domestic LPG only," the Union petroleum ministry said in an order.

The government also directed all oil refineries and petrochemical complexes in India to utilise propane and butane streams to produce only LPG, instead of using them for other petrochemical products.

The move comes at a time when India's LPG imports have been affected due to supply disruptions in West Asia amid the ongoing conflict in the region. India imports more than 50% of its LPG requirements, with around 80% of the imports coming from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE. Last week, the government directed OMCs to ramp up LPG production.

With supplies from the Gulf region impacted, the government is now diversifying its import sources. According to a petroleum ministry official, India is already in talks with countries including Australia, Norway and Algeria to secure additional LPG supplies.

New Delhi recently signed contracts to import around 2.2 million tonnes per annum of LPG from the US, accounting for nearly 10% of the country's total annual LPG imports. Supplies under these contracts began in January 2026.

Meanwhile, several states including Bihar, Maharashtra and Punjab have reported shortages of LPG and fuel. However, the government has clarified that petrol pumps and gas stations are functioning normally and there is no fuel shortage in the country.

The decision to prioritise domestic LPG supply has, however, set alarm bells ringing among businesses. Several industry bodies have written to the government seeking urgent intervention.

The National Restaurant Association of India on Monday warned that any disruption in commercial LPG cylinder supply could lead to widespread closure of restaurants. The Bengaluru Hotels Association also said that many restaurants in the city may not be able to operate from Wednesday due to shortage of commercial LPG.

After industry bodies expressed concerns, the petroleum ministry stepped in to clarify that imported LPG for non-domestic use will be supplied to essential sectors such as hospitals and educational institutions. As for the shortage faced by restaurants and hotels, a panel of three OMC directors will review requests for LPG cylinders from them.

$119

Oil breaches $100-mark for 1st time in 4 years

Crude oil prices on Monday crossed the $100-mark for the first time in four years with Brent crude touching an intraday high of $119 per barrel before cooling to $102.1 per barrel. West Texas Intermediate also soared to touch $119.48 per barrel but fell back closer to $100 | P10

Khamenei's son chosen successor

Iran named the hard-line Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei to succeed his late father as supreme leader, a decision that is likely to annoy the US | P7

4-day week in Pakistan

Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif announced work from home for 50% of the staff, a four-day working week, big cut in govt spend, and ban on state dinners and iftars | P15

Indian focus on peace, diplomacy, safeguarding national interest: EAM

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

BRIEFING Parliament on the situation in West Asia, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said India is in favour of peace and urges a return to dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the conflict.

"India is in favour of peace and urges a return to dialogue and diplomacy. We advocate de-escalation, restraint and ensuring the safety of civilians," he said. In his suo motu address to both houses of Parliament, Jaishankar said, India's response to the conflict is guided by three core principles—peace and a return to dialogue and diplomacy, the well-being and security of the Indian community in the Gulf, and safeguarding India's national interests.

There are almost one crore Indian citizens who live and work across the Gulf, including thousands in Iran. The region is key to India's energy security. The Gulf is also a major trade partner, accounting for $200 billion annually, he said.

"The well-being and security of the Indian community in the region is our overriding priority. We will continue to work with the governments of the region towards that end," he said, adding "our national interest, including energy security and trade flows, will always be paramount."

Jaishankar's address was met with strong protests from the Opposition demanding a full-fledged debate in both Houses on the situation in West Asia.

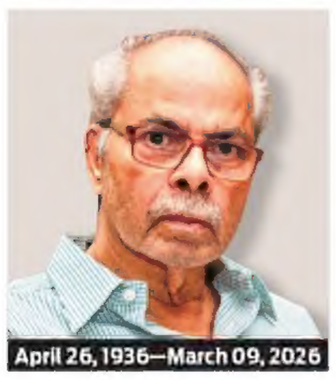
LPG crisis: Bengaluru hotels plan shutdown

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a major blow to professionals, students and travellers, the Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels Association (BBHA) announced on Monday that thousands of hotels could shut from Tuesday. The decision comes following an abrupt halt in the supply of commercial LPG cylinders, leaving thousands of establishments unable to operate. The association said the sudden disruption contradicts a previous promise by oil companies, guaranteeing a steady supply for at least 70 days.

Association president PC Rao said because of irregular LPG supplies, tea stalls, bakeries and hotels are hit hard. "The Association has 2,000 members. We spoke to Central ministers. The government should respond immediately. The stock will get exhausted in a day in Bengaluru, where hotels are supplied 40,000 cylinders ," he said.

"Tens of thousands of professionals and students, staying in paying guest accommodations, rely on hotels for food. With the shutdown, they will have to fend for themselves," said Arun Kumar DT, president, PG Owners' Welfare Association.



April 26, 1936—March 09, 2026

PANIKKAR RESHAPED MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

K N Panikkar stands alongside the generation that transformed modern Indian history from political narrative to social history; from nationalist teleology to structural analysis, writes Rajan Gurukkal | P10

Most parties in Bengal for 1-2 phase of polls, ECI told

SUBHENDU MAITI @ Kolkata

ALMOST all political parties in West Bengal on Monday suggested to the Election Commission of India that the upcoming assembly polls in the state be held in one or two phases.

The full bench of the ECI met representatives of political parties separately at a private hotel in Kolkata's New Town as part of its review of the preparations for the polls that are likely in April.

Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, accompanied by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, met representatives of the TMC, BJP, CPI(M), Congress and AAP, among others.

The ruling Trinamool Congress and CPM expressed concerns about 'unbearable' harassments faced by common citizens during SIR hearings and categorising more than 60 lakh voters as 'under adjudication' status. The TMC delegation, comprising ministers Firhad Hakim and Chandrima Bhattacharya and Rajeev Kumar (retired DGP), urged the ECI not to conduct the poll without addressing the discrepancies in the voters' lists.

However, the BJP was noncommittal on the issue of SIR but demanded that polls be held in one to three phases and in a peaceful environment. "We sought the active deployment of 400 companies Central forces already present in the state," they later told reporters.

Officials said the excise department was asked to ensure production and distribution of intoxicants do not increase in the run-up to the polls. The RBI was asked to ensure cash is not used to influence voters.

Minister claims CEC asked him to shut up

TMC minister Chandrima Bhattacharya alleged the CEC didn't want to hear their objections. "He told me 'shut up' when I wanted to convey grievances on voter deletion

ERRORS REMOVED

Revised draft list for GBA elections has 89K voters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THERE are a total of 88,92,528 voters in the ward-wise, revised draft voters list of the five urban corporations under the Greater Bangalore Authority (GBA), said District Election Officer and GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao.

Speaking to reporters on Monday after releasing the revised draft voters list for the elections in GBA, he said that the draft voters list was released on January 19. He said that the revised voter list is released after correcting the errors and making the necessary changes. "A total of five city corporations, including Bengaluru Central, Bangalore North, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru East and Bengaluru West city corporations, have been formed in the GBA area.

The revised draft voter list for the GBA city corporation elections has a total of 88,92,528 voters, including 45,69,752 males, 43,21,143 females and 1,635 other voters, and 8,024 polling stations will be provided," he said.

Rao added that, out of the 369 wards in the GBA area, Ward Number 51-Subramanyapura of Bangalore South City Corporation will have the highest number of 54,026 voters. Ward No. 16-Kothnur of Bengaluru East Municipal Corporation will have the lowest number of 10,940 voters. P2

Despite sops, enrolment in govt schools low: Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

DESPITE giving uniforms, food and shoes, government schools are seeing a dip in the number of students year after year, said Minister for Primary and Education **Madhu Bangarappa** in the Legislative Council on Monday, expressing his helplessness. Accepting that government schools do face shortcomings, he said many reforms have been brought in, and urged students to return to government schools.

Replying to BJP MLC Nirani Hanumant Rudrappa, he said the enrolment of children in Kannada schools dropped by 11.20% in the last three years and it is not because of opening of Karnataka Public Schools (KPS). It is because of parents' obsession with English medium schools, their attraction to national curriculum and an increase in the number of private schools.

He said the government will come up with a campaign to increase enrolment and urged public representatives to join hands to bring children to government schools in their respective constituencies. To increase enrolment, bilingual medium classes have been started from Classes 1 to 5, and select government schools that have enough space and good enrolment are being upgraded to KPS, providing education from pre-primary till pre-university, he said. P4

No-confidence motion against CEC coming

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

IN signs of heightening friction between the Opposition and the Election Commission of India (ECI), several parties are mulling a notice to move a motion seeking ouster of CEC Gyanesh Kumar, sources said on Monday.

The issue was discussed on Monday at an INDIA bloc meeting chaired by Mallikarjun Kharge, leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha, said a Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader who also pointed out that West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee is currently holding an indefinite dharna against lakhs of names being deleted in the ongoing poll roll revision in the state. "The CEC has degraded the great seat he occupies," the TMC leader said.

Congress sources said they would support the notice and that other INDIA bloc parties are on the same page. The notice has been drafted collectively, said the leader.

As per rules, signatures of at least 100 MPs from Lok Sabha and at least 50 MPs from Rajya Sabha are required to move the notice.

The CEC can only be removed on grounds of proven misbehaviour or incapacity.

EARNING QUICK BUCK

Ambulances turn into passenger vehicles in Gadag

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @ Gadag

GADAG district hospital's ambulances have reportedly become passenger vehicles. A few people who have visited the KH Patil Institute of Medical Sciences (KHPIMS) alleged that some ambulance drivers are ferrying passengers to and from the hospital campus at Mallasamudra for money.

A video footage also went viral on Monday morning. Sources in KHPIMS, however, brushed the allegation aside, saying it could be one driver's misdemeanour and the authorities would investigate the matter. They confirmed that the KHPIMS director has received a complaint in this regard.

An ambulance soliciting passengers near KHIMS campus in Gadag | EXPRESS

The authorities had ignored several complaints in the past about the practice for want of evidence, but took it seriously after a man recorded the video and posted it on social media platforms. "Ambulance drivers are in a responsible position and they should not allow any people inside the emergency vehicle. They should operate only for the needy in emergency situations," said a KHPIMS official.

Iranna Dotihal, who was at the bus shelter when the man recorded the video, said, "We were waiting for the bus for more than half an hour on Gadag–Lakshmeshwar road. There were auto rickshaws but they stuffed passengers like sheep, hence, we were waiting for a bus. It was then an ambulance came out of the KHPIMS campus and stopped around 100 metres away from the bus shelter. Many people ran towards the ambulance and boarded it. Later, we came to know that the driver charges people the bus fare."

KHPIMS Director Dr Basavaraj Bommanahalli said, "We have seen the video. The ambulance does not belong to KHPIMS. Still we have started an inquiry. The district health officer is also gathering details. Action will be taken against the driver."